

XXIII.—*Notes on the Birds of Alderney.*

By Major W. R. THOMPSON, R.A., M.B.O.U.

FOR much of the information contained in the following notes I am indebted to my friend, that good sportsman, Major L. J. A. Langlois, of the Royal Alderney Artillery and Engineers. Without his aid they would have been far less full, and more especially are my thanks due to him for that valuable table giving the date of arrival on the island of the first Woodcock.

Langlois has lived and shot, or I should rather say, shot and lived—he himself would put the shooting first—in Alderney since 1885, and has at his house, “Holmwood,” a small but well set up collection of many of the rarer visitors—birds, not human beings—to the island. I make further acknowledgement of his assistance in the text, where, since his name would perforce appear so frequently, I have denoted him by his initial “L.”

My own observations of the avifauna of the island commenced on the date of my first joining the station in November 1912, and continued, with intervals, until the 1st of August, 1914, when, owing to the imminence of war, the Garrison Company in which I was then serving left the island. I was again posted to Alderney in 1918, and landed on the 8th of November, since when my observations have continued to the present time, July 1920, with the all important exception of a period of six weeks during the autumn migration of 1919, when I had the misfortune to be away on duty.

The Island of Alderney will be found fully described in the guide books, but a few remarks from an ornithological view-point are perhaps called for. The island, then, is situated in latitude $49^{\circ} 43'$ North and longitude $2^{\circ} 12'$ West. It is the most northerly of the Channel Islands, and lies about nine miles in a westerly direction from the nearest point on the coast of France, Cap de la Hague, on the Cotentin Peninsula. From the point of view of migration it is the

most important of this group of islands, and prior to the construction of the Alderney Lighthouse was, by all accounts, of even greater interest. The Alderney Lighthouse, first opened in 1912, lies at the eastern end of the island, and its value to the seafaring community at large is exemplified by the almost total cessation, since its construction, of the very numerous shipwrecks which formerly took place here, but since "one man's meat is another man's poison," it may be remarked that the islanders are the poorer for being deprived of that part of their livelihood which was closely connected with the afore-mentioned wrecks—at least so tradition has it.

And as an ornithologist I can to some extent sympathise with them, inasmuch as, whatever be the exact explanation, it appears certain that, since the Alderney Light came into use, the stream of migration has been somehow diverted and does not now pass so closely to the island as formerly, with the result that far fewer birds of passage are observed.

Many theories have been advanced to account for this change, but so many new lights have been constructed along the coasts of France and England, that it may be due to one or a combination of these, or even to a cause quite unconnected with any of them, but one interesting theory I have heard, and which may have something in it, is as follows. Before the Alderney Light was constructed, the only light in the immediate neighbourhood was that of the Casquets, and, since Alderney lies in a direct line between the nearest point on the French coast and the Casquets Light, it has been thought that the flights, on leaving the Continent, were attracted by the nearest light and, passing immediately over Alderney, many individuals were induced to land and rest there, and *vice versa* on their return journey. They are now attracted by the Alderney Light on the extreme eastern end of the island, and thus, for the most part, miss the land altogether.

Alderney itself is a very small island some $3\frac{1}{2}$ square miles in area. Its greatest length from east to west is $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and its average width about one mile. Its southern

and western seaboard are high and rocky, the cliffs being rugged, much broken, and very picturesque. The height of these cliffs varies from 230 feet to nearly 300 feet near Telegraph Bay, their highest point. They fall almost vertically into the sea, and there is, consequently, little or no foreshore exposed on this side of the island at low water, with the exception of Longy Bay, at the eastern termination of the cliffs, where a comparatively large extent of sand and seaweed-covered rocks is uncovered as the tide recedes, affording feeding grounds for many Waders, principally Oyster-catchers and Turnstones.

From the high southern edge a plateau generally extends towards the interior of the island, and then falls away gradually to the northern shore. The main harbour and roadstead are on this side, the coast being here, for the most part, of sand and shingle, with here and there outcrops of granite forming bold forelands in miniature between the sandy bays. The western end and elevated interior of the island are mostly under cultivation, fields being separated by loosely built stone walls, or rubble and stone banks, the interstices in which form convenient nesting places for some of the smaller birds. These walls and banks are of no great height, and are generally out of repair. A similar wall runs along the greater part of the western and southern edges, "divides the desert from the sown," and leaves between it and the edge of the cliff a space some hundreds of yards in breadth of rough stony land overgrown with furze, bracken, bramble, heather, and coarse grasses.

The eastern end of the island lies low and is unfit for cultivation by reason of its rocky and sandy nature; it is overgrown with weeds, coarse grasses, and furze.

The island contains no river, but here and there small streamlets of fresh water are found. Most of the disused stone quarries hold water, and near Longy Bay is a pond filled with rushes.

The island is almost destitute of trees, but there are some rather fine ones in the vicinity of St. Anne's, which, however, it is to be regretted, are in process of being cut down by the

inhabitants for use as firewood, and it is hoped that legislation will step in to preserve those remaining.

Included with Alderney is the small islet of Burhou, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles distant and separated from it by the passage known as the Swinge, through which, at spring tides, the current sets with great violence. There are also several outlying rocks of which the most notable are the Casquets, the Ortae, the Garden Rocks, and Coque Lithou. Both Burhou and the above mentioned outlying rocks are exceedingly difficult to approach owing to the strong and uncertain currents, and can only be visited in calm weather.

Owing to the propinquity of the French coast many birds pass to and fro at will in both winter and summer, either as the spirit moves them or as the weather conditions dictate, so that a species which is very numerous one day may be absent or almost entirely absent on another, and for this reason it is sometimes very difficult to discriminate accurately between a resident and a bird of passage.

Very little appears to have been written on the ornithology of Alderney. 'The Channel Islands,' by Ansted and Latham, published in 1862, contains a list of birds purporting to be found in Alderney, but, admirable as this work undoubtedly is in other respects, it can scarcely be looked upon as an authority on ornithology, if only by reason of the Editor's remarks in his preface, where he states: "The Editor not being conversant with the details of Botany and Zoology, has sought and obtained the assistance of many friends and acquaintances."

The next book in point of time would appear to be 'The Birds of Guernsey and the neighbouring Islands of Alderney, Sark, Herm, Jethou,' by Cecil Smith, published in 1879. This book appears to be reliable and is very interesting reading. Although now very out of date in many respects, it still remains the text-book on the subject.

In the autumn of 1898 the island was visited by Dr. W. Eagle Clarke, and his observations on the birds appeared in 'The Ibis' for April 1899. He remained but a week, and

the number of birds noticed by him in this short period is remarkable, even allowing for the fact that the autumn migration was in full swing ; but a week is far too short a period on which to form conclusions, and the habit of many species, as noted above, of passing across the Race from the French coast to the island and *vice versa* at will, appears to have led him into some wrong assumptions with regard to the relative abundance of different species.

Corvus corax. The Raven.

The bird is a resident, and a pair may usually be met with along the shore or cliffs, attention being probably first attracted to them by their well-known harsh cry.

At least one pair breed here, and in February 1914 I visited a nest which contained six eggs. It was a pleasure to find that the same nest was still being occupied in 1920. The bird also breeds in Guernsey where, in 1909, I visited a nest. It contained five nearly fledged young ones, and I was induced to take one as a pet. It was an interesting and amusing bird, and no trouble so long as it had sufficient food ; but eventually its appetite grew to such an extent and it did so much damage in the garden, by biting off the young shoots and buds, that I gave it to the Brighton Zoological Gardens, where, however, it did not live long.

Mr. Cecil Smith, writing in 1879, was of opinion that the bird did not breed on any of the islands. He says: "The Raven can now only be looked upon as an occasional straggler. I do not think it breeds at present in any of the islands, as I have not seen it anywhere about in the breeding season since 1866, when I saw a pair near the cliffs on the south end of the island (Guernsey) in June ; but as the Raven is a very early breeder, these may only have been wanderers." Mr. Eagle Clarke saw three Ravens in Sark on the 29th of September, 1898, which he concluded, and no doubt rightly, were residents. It would therefore appear that the Raven is not only holding its own, but actually increasing in numbers, at any rate locally.

Corvus corone. The Carrion-Crow.

A very common resident, and becoming more so. It is to be found nesting on the low trees on the island, but more commonly, owing no doubt to the scarcity of trees, it nests on the outlying rocks, often close to the ground and not far above high-water mark. Curiously enough it does not appear to make much use of the safer situation afforded by the high cliffs of the southern shore, although a few pairs do nest there. The birds are more numerous in the autumn and winter months, but this may be due to the young birds remaining with the family until the approach of the next breeding-season, when they probably depart to make a home for themselves elsewhere. These birds are very bold during the breeding-season and frequently take toll of young chickens.

Corvus cornix. The Hooded Crow.

I saw one of these birds on the 20th of November, 1918, and a flock of ten—the largest number I have seen together on the island—on the 30th of October, 1919, and another on the 15th of November, 1919. L. tells me he sees some during the month of October every year, and that they usually arrive just before the first Woodcock, their appearance being looked upon by the islanders as an indication that Cocks may be expected. Several Cocks were shot on the day after I had seen the flock of ten Crows mentioned above. Mr. Cecil Smith says: "The Hooded Crow can only be considered an occasional autumnal and winter visitant—Mr. MacCulloch writes me word that the Hooded Crow is a very rare visitant, and only, as far as he knows, in very cold weather; and, he adds, it is strange that we should see it so rarely, as it is very common about St. Malo." Neither Langlois nor myself, with the exceptions of the two birds mentioned above as seen in November, and which I prefer, owing to the extreme mildness of the season, to regard as late migrants, have seen this bird in Alderney during the winter months, even in hard weather, and it must therefore, at present, be considered as a bird of passage only, although

there would appear to be no reason why it should not be met with in winter. I have no record of it in the spring.

Corvus monedula. The Jackdaw.

This bird breeds here and is a resident, although not common outside the breeding-season, and frequently almost entirely absent. Those which breed here arrive, doubtless from the adjacent French coast, in the early spring, when for some days a flock of perhaps twenty or thirty birds may be seen performing evolutions in the air, at intervals returning to ground, and evidently reconnoitring the cliffs for a suitable nesting-place. After the breeding-season they disappear except for a few isolated individuals, the flock appearing again at uncertain intervals during summer and winter, to depart again after a few days' visit.

Pica pica. The Magpie.

I have not observed this bird myself on the island, and it must be considered as a rare visitor only, the absence of high trees and tall undergrowth no doubt accounting for this.

L. saw three of them together in about the year 1900, but is uncertain of the date. He also saw three in September 1919, and tells me that during the hard winter of 1870 they were very numerous, and that many were caught and kept as pets by the islanders.

The bird is fairly common in Guernsey.

Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax. The Chough.

Mr. Cecil Smith writes: "In Sark the Choughs have by no means so easy a time, as the Jackdaws outnumber them about the cliffs, and will probably eventually drive them out of the island; indeed, I am afraid they have done this in Alderney, as I did not see any when there in the summer of 1876, nor in this last summer (1878). I, however, saw some there in previous visits, but now for some reason, probably the increase of Jackdaws, the Choughs appear to be nearly, if not quite, to have deserted the island." This is, and probably will remain, the last record of the Chough in

Alderney, and it disappeared from the cliffs of the Dorset coast opposite not many years later. I have been unable to obtain any record of its having been seen here by the "oldest inhabitant," although the bird is one not difficult to describe. However, we may yet hope to record Choughs in Alderney, as I see in one of our latest works—'A Practical Handbook of British Birds'—the Channel Islands are given as a habitat for it, and in 'British Birds' for February 1920, one is recorded by Mr. H. B. Baillie as having been seen by him in Guernsey on the 22nd of April, 1919.

Sturnus vulgaris. The Starling.

A common resident, but less common in summer than winter, when their number is largely increased by arrivals from overseas.

Chloris chloris. The Greenfinch.

This bird is a resident in small numbers and breeds here, but a large proportion of the residents appear to leave the island for the purpose of breeding, owing probably to the limited number of suitable hedgerows, returning again in July and the rest of the summer and wintering here. Its numbers are also temporarily increased in spring and autumn by birds of passage. It is more common some years than others.

Coccothraustes coccothraustes. The Hawfinch.

Mr. Tourgis, of Alderney, has in his possession a stuffed specimen, which was shot on the island by Mr. R. Herival.

Mr. Cecil Smith, writing in 1879, states: "The bird-stuffer and carpenter in Alderney had one spread out on a board and hung up behind his door, which had been shot by his friend who shot the Greenland Falcon, in the winter of 1876-1877, somewhere about Christmas."

Carduelis carduelis britannica. The British Goldfinch.

The bird is resident in small numbers and breeds here. As a bird of passage it occurs in fair numbers in spring and autumn.

Passer domesticus. The House-Sparrow.

A common resident. Its numbers appear to remain constant throughout the year. Less numerous than in most parts of England.

Fringilla cœlebs. The Chaffinch.

A resident breeding here, but its numbers are greatly increased during the winter months by migration.

Mr. Eagle Clarke, who visited the island in September, 1898, for about a week, considered it decidedly uncommon—a mistake due doubtless to his short stay, when possibly the main body was on one of its periodical visits to the French coast.

Acanthis cannabina. The Linnet.

A common resident. Its numbers are increased during the winter months by migration, and as a bird of passage it is in some years extremely numerous for a few days or weeks, according to circumstances, most probably the weather conditions. In the spring of 1919, from the 1st to the 5th of May, after a continuance of very cold north winds, large flocks were present on the island. I estimated these flocks to contain many thousands of individuals.

Pyrrhula pyrrhula pileata. The British Bullfinch.

A scarce resident, at least one pair breeding here, and I have occasionally met with it at irregular intervals in both summer and winter. At times it appears to be entirely absent, probably visiting the French coast. This is the only record I can find of the occurrence of the Bullfinch in Alderney, and the inhabitants do not appear to have noticed it. As I write (7th of July, 1920) a family of recently fledged young ones are not far away, the nest, which I found with eggs in the middle of May, having fortunately escaped the attention of the boys.

Emberiza calandra. The Corn-Bunting.

L. has shot five on the island, one in the autumn of each of the following years:—1892, 1893, 1894, 1896, and 1911.

It is not a resident, so that those shot must have been migrating, and it may probably best be considered as a rare bird of passage. I have not myself observed it. L. has one of the five birds mentioned above in his collection.

Emberiza citrinella. The Yellow-Hammer.

This bird has so far defeated me, and I can only conclude that it has disappeared from the island in recent years, as I have never come across it. Mr. Cecil Smith, writing in 1879, says: "The Yellow-Hammer, though resident and breeding in all the islands, is by no means so common as in many parts of England. In Alderney it is perhaps rather more common than in Guernsey, as I saw some near the Artillery Barracks this summer, 1878, and Captain Hubbach told me he had seen two or three pairs about there all the year."

Mr. Eagle Clarke reports it as being common in Alderney in September 1898, and L. tells me that he has frequently found it nesting here.

Emberiza cirrus. The Cirl Bunting.

I killed a specimen of this bird on the 24th of December, 1913. It was at the time feeding on a dust-heap, in company with a mixed flock of linnets, sparrows, and chaffinches. I also observed it on the following occasions, when it was doubtless on migration to the south coast of England, where it breeds:—

20th of April, 1914—a flock of about twelve.

22nd of April, 1914—several in my garden.

23rd of April, 1914—one near Fort Tourgis.

I have not seen it during the summer months, and do not think it breeds here, but on the 21st of January, 1919, I noticed one or two amongst a number of Rock-Pipits, so probably it occasionally winters here. Mr. Cecil Smith, writing in 1879, says of this bird: "I have never seen the Cirl Bunting in any of the islands, nor has it, as far as I know, been recorded from them, which seems rather surprising, as it is common on the south coast of Devon, and

migratory, but not numerous on the north coast of France, so it is very probable that it may yet occur." Mr. Smith's prophecy has been realised after a lapse of thirty-four years.

Plectrophenax nivalis. The Snow-Bunting.

Mr. Cecil Smith states: "Captain Hubbach writes me word that he shot three out of a flock of five in Alderney in January 1863."

Alauda arvensis. The Sky-Lark.

A common resident. Its numbers are, however, augmented during the winter months by migration.

Motacilla alba. The White Wagtail.

Four birds of this species settled in my garden on the evening of the 15th of March, 1919, having evidently just arrived from overseas. They were fairly numerous on the 24th of March, 1919, after which I saw none until the 6th of April, when I observed a single individual. It is a bird of passage.

Motacilla lugubris. The Pied Wagtail.

I have met with this bird at rare intervals in both summer and winter, so I think it must be looked upon as a scarce resident, although I have not found it nesting here. As a bird of passage it is not uncommon. Mr. Eagle Clarke found it quite common in September 1898.

Motacilla cinerea. The Grey Wagtail.

As a winter visitor this bird is not uncommon, and during this period single individuals can almost always be met with if searched for along the numerous small streams. I have never seen it here in the summer.

Motacilla raii. The Yellow Wagtail.

Is very common as a bird of passage, especially during the spring migration, but is also a summer visitor, a few pairs remaining to breed every year, more having remained this year (1920), I think, than usual. During the spring of 1919 the migration of all birds was much delayed by bad weather, and a flock of these birds passed over the island, going north, as late as the 7th of May.

Anthus trivialis. The Tree-Pipit.

Mr. Cecil Smith, writing in 1879, says of this bird: "A very numerous summer visitant to all the islands, breeding in great numbers in parts suited to it."

I found this bird to be common on migration during the latter part of August 1920. I obtained one on the 23rd of August, 1920.

Anthus pratensis. The Meadow-Pipit.

A common resident. I do not think its numbers are much, if at all, increased by migration.

Anthus petrosus. The Rock-Pipit.

A common resident, more common than the last species. It breeds on all the outlying rocks, as well as the main island. I do not think its numbers are increased by migration.

Certhia familiaris britannica. The British Tree-Creeper.

I constantly observed a single individual of this species throughout the winter of 1919-1920, and hoped that it would remain to breed, and I even put up a nesting-box for its accommodation, but in the spring, instead of being joined by a mate, it disappeared.

Regulus regulus. The Golden-crested Wren.

I have only noticed this bird on one occasion—on the 2nd of November, 1919. On this date I saw three in my garden, and there were doubtless others, but it was towards evening and getting dark. I only noticed the first one by almost stepping on it amongst some weeds which I was pulling up. Poor little birds, they appeared to be quite done up after a week of strong cold north-east winds.

I went to the house for a butterfly-net, and had no difficulty in catching one for identification, thinking it might be the Fire-crest, after which I let it go.

Mr. Eagle Clarke saw many of these birds on the island on the 25th and 26th of September, 1898, and L. tells me that it is usually very numerous as a bird of passage; but I

think few have occurred since the severe winter of 1916-1917, when there were so many casualties.

Parus major newtoni. The British Great Tit.

A common resident breeding here, but more numerous outside the breeding-season and especially in winter. Like so many of the other residents, and doubtless owing to the restricted area of the island, the majority are absent from the island during the breeding-season. Throughout the whole of the autumn and winter of 1919-1920 there was a quite abnormal number of these birds about, and a few were nearly always in sight, in fact it must have been almost the commonest bird on the island, but nearly all departed on the approach of spring.

Parus cæruleus obscurus. The British Blue Tit.

A scarce resident. Its numbers are not noticeably affected by migration.

Lanius excubitor. The Great Grey Shrike.

L. shot one of these birds on the island in 1888, and has it in his collection. This is, I think, the only record of this bird for the island.

Ampelis garrulus. The Waxwing.

Mr. A. C. Tourgis, of Les Chevaliers, Alderney, has one of these birds in his collection. He shot it at Rose Farm, Alderney, in the autumn of 1897.

Sylvia communis. The Whitethroat.

A common summer visitor, and bird of passage. Considerable numbers remained to breed in 1920.

Sylvia curruca. The Lesser Whitethroat.

I have only noticed this bird in small numbers as a bird of passage. Doubtless it occasionally remains to breed, as there are many suitable places for it.

Sylvia simplex. The Garden-Warbler.

Not uncommon during migration, especially in some years. I have not found it breeding here, nor have I seen it during the summer months.

Sylvia atricapilla. The Blackcap.

Occurs regularly as a bird of passage. The males were very numerous here on the 6th of May, 1919, but, as already remarked, the spring migration was much delayed that year.

Acrocephalus scirpaceus. The Reed-Warbler.

In the 'Channel Islands,' by Ansted & Latham, Mr. Galliene in his remarks accompanying his list of Birds of the Channel Islands, says:—"I have put the Reed-Warbler as doubtful for Guernsey, but I have seen a nest of this bird found at Alderney." I have not myself seen this bird and do not think it now breeds here.

Phylloscopus trochilus. The Willow-Warbler.

A common bird of passage. I have not found it breeding here.

Phylloscopus collybita. The Chiffchaff.

A common bird of passage, a few generally remaining to breed. A few individuals wintered here during 1919-1920, and so it must also be looked upon as a scarce resident.

Turdus viscivorus. The Missel-Thrush.

Common in winter during cold weather. L. tells me that he has found it nesting here, but I think it has almost, if not quite, ceased to do so, as I have not observed it during the breeding-season.

Turdus musicus clarkii. The Song-Thrush.

A common resident.

Turdus iliacus. The Redwing.

Common in winter during cold spells, or continuous strong north-east winds. At other times not often seen.

Turdus pilaris. The Fieldfare.

As in the case of the last species, it is common during cold weather or strong north-east winds, but unlike that species, it does not disappear so quickly on the weather moderating, and a few may usually be met with throughout the winter, even in mild weather.

Turdus merula. The Blackbird.

A common resident, being slightly more numerous than the Thrush.

Turdus torquatus. The Ring-Ouzel.

L. tells me that these birds are usually common during the autumn migration, arriving towards the end of September and remaining about a month. Dr. Eagle Clarke noticed it here in September 1898, and it appears to be more numerous in autumn than in spring. I saw one near my house on the 20th of April, 1919.

Phœnicurus phœnicurus. The Redstart.

A common bird of passage.

Phœnicurus ochrurus gibraltariensis. The Black Redstart.

A few generally winter on the island, but I saw none here last winter, and think that it was absent that year (1919-1920).

Erithacus rubecula melophilus. The Robin.

A common resident. I do not think its numbers are at all affected by migration.

Saxicola rubicola. The Stonechat.

A common summer visitor, a few remaining through the winter, and therefore also a scarce resident. I shot one on the 10th of December, 1913.

Saxicola rubetra. The Whinchat.

A bird of passage in small numbers. I have only noticed it during the spring migrations, and do not think that it ever remains to breed, although there seems to be no reason why it should not do so. Mr. Eagle Clarke saw it here in September 1898.

Enanthe œnanthe. The Wheatear.

A common bird of passage and a summer visitor, many remaining to breed.

Accentor modularis. The Hedge-Sparrow.

A common resident. I do not think its numbers are at all affected by migration.

Cinclus cinclus britannicus. The Dipper.

Mr. Cecil Smith states in regard to this bird: "Captain Hubbach writes me word he saw one in Alderney in the winter of 1861-1862." This is the only record of this bird, and I do not think it now occurs.

Troglodytes troglodytes. The Wren.

A common resident. I do not think its numbers are affected by migration.

Muscicapa grisola. The Spotted Flycatcher.

A common bird of passage. I do not know that it ever remains to breed.

Muscicapa atricapilla. The Pied Flycatcher.

A few occur annually as birds of passage. Mr. Eagle Clarke records one in "female" plumage, as seen by himself and his friend Mr. Laidlaw in the island on the 27th of September, 1898.

Hirundo rustica. The Swallow.

A common summer visitor.

Delichon urbica. The Martin.

Mr. Cecil Smith says of this bird: "It is spread over all the islands, but confined to certain spots in each. In Alderney there were a great many nests about Scott's Hotel and a few more in the town." None of these birds are breeding here this year (1920). I have been round the whole town and carefully inspected Scott's Hotel, and there is no sign of a nest, nor are there any birds about. Unfortunately I did not pay much attention to this bird last year, but do not think it bred, as otherwise there should be some sign of the old nests under the eaves of the houses. I cannot understand why it should not breed here, as conditions appear suitable, and it is a common bird of passage. This year a large flock remained several weeks on the island, and indeed did not depart until the 24th of May, when they all left together.

Riparia riparia. The Sand-Martin.

A common bird of passage. It never remains to breed; there are no suitable nesting-places for it.

Dryobates sp. ? The Spotted Woodpecker.

L. tells me that a Spotted Woodpecker, either the Great or Lesser, was shot here in November 1891, by a Mr. Levens, who has left the island. Unfortunately it does not appear to have been preserved.

Iynx torquilla. The Wryneck.

A common summer visitor. As Mr. Cecil Smith says, its numbers vary considerably in different years. It is particularly numerous in Alderney this year, and at present (the middle of July 1920) the young may be met with along almost any wall or hedgerow.

Cuculus canorus. The Cuckoo.

A common summer visitor, more numerous than I have anywhere seen it in England. Its numbers vary in different years. In 1919 it was unusually numerous.

Micropus apus. The Swift.

A very common summer visitor, breeding numerous, not only in the old forts and houses on the island, but also in the cracks and crannies of the sea-cliffs.

Caprimulgus europæus. The Nightjar.

Occurs annually as a bird of passage in both spring and autumn. I have not found its nest, but it probably breeds here, as one or two may be seen at intervals throughout the summer.

Merops apiaster. The Bee-eater.

L. has one in his collection. It is a male bird, and he obtained it in his garden on the 18th of May, 1917. This is, I think, the only record of it for Alderney.

Upupa epops. The Hoopoe.

Mr. Cecil Smith says of this bird: "I have one obtained in Alderney in August, though I have not the exact date,"

neither does he give the year, but it must have been prior to 1879, when his book was published. I have not myself seen it here, nor does anyone seem to have preserved a specimen ; but I have several notes of its occurrence, and as it is a bird that cannot well be mistaken, and as I obtained the records from good observers, I think they are worth giving. L. has seen two on the island, one in September 1910, and the other about the year 1877. He tells me that the late Mr. R. G. May, of Alderney, once shot one here. Mr. Nicholas Gaudion tells me that he shot one back in the seventies, but he has not the exact date.

Alcedo ispida. The Kingfisher.

Before the war the Kingfisher was a not uncommon bird on the island, and one or two could always be seen in winter around the cliffs or fishing from the rocks. It was also present during the summer months, though less numerous, and I have little doubt it occasionally nested here. During the last two years, however, I have not seen a single specimen, nor do I know of anyone who has, and it seems to have quite disappeared ; it is hoped not permanently.

Mr. Eagle Clarke found it not uncommon during his visit in September 1898.

Flammea flammea. The Barn-Owl.

A resident, but by no means common. L. has two in his collection, and tells me he has shot four in all, and has observed it on several other occasions. I had noticed one of these birds about all last summer and located the hole occupied by it, but it was not easy of access and I did not visit it, although I felt pretty certain it was breeding there. This year, however, seeing it in the same vicinity, I determined to clear up the question, and, with the aid of a rope, descended to the hole. No sooner had my feet come opposite the hole than a barn-owl left it and disappeared round a corner, and on looking into the hole I saw three young ones, two nearly fledged and the other much younger and about half the size of the other two. This, I think, is the first record of the Barn-Owl breeding in Alderney. Date of visiting nest, 18 July, 1920.

Asio otus. The Long-eared Owl.

A bird of passage, but by no means common, and so far only noticed in the autumn. L. has one in his collection and has shot four of them—one in the autumn of each of the following years, 1893, 1899, 1900, 1904. Bearing in mind how seldom even our common residential owls are seen, the fact of this species having been observed on four occasions in twenty-seven years, whilst passing through the island on migration, argues that it is of frequent occurrence as a bird of passage, and is probably a regular visitor. It is curious how seldom this bird is noticed during the spring migration. It usually occurs here in November, so it would appear to be a late migrant at this period. I have not myself seen this bird.

Asio accipitrinus. The Short-eared Owl.

A common bird of passage and also a winter visitor, but the numbers remaining for the winter months vary considerably in different years. As a bird of passage it occurs more frequently in the autumn than the spring. L. tells me he once shot a specimen here in August.

Circus æruginosus. The Marsh-Harrier.

L. has two in his collection—a male and a female. He shot the male on the 21st of August, 1899, and the female the following day.

Mr. A. C. Tourgis also had a young male in his collection. He shot it here about the year 1894.

Circus pygargus. Montagu's Harrier.

Mr. Cecil Smith says of this bird: "Miss C. B. Carey records one in the 'Zoologist' for 1873 as having been shot in Alderney in July of that year. She adds that it was an adult male in full plumage, and that she saw it herself at Mr. Couch's shop."

The above is the only record I have for this bird.

Buteo buteo. The Buzzard.

L. tells me he shot one in the autumn of 1886.

The only other record for the occurrence of this bird in

Alderney that I can find is contained in the following quotation from Mr. Cecil Smith's book : "The Buzzard is a tolerably regular, and by no means uncommon, autumnal visitant, specimens occurring from some of the islands almost every autumn. But it is, I believe, an autumnal visitant only, as I do not know of a single specimen taken at any other time of year, nor can I find a record of one. I have seen examples in the flesh from both Alderney and Herm, in both of which islands it occurs at least as frequently as it does in Guernsey, though still only as an autumnal visitant." I do not think it ever visits the island at the present time.

Buteo lagopus. The Rough-legged Buzzard.

Mr. Cecil Smith, in his book, states that on his visit to Alderney in June 1878, he found one of these birds at the bird-stuffer and carpenter's shop there which had been shot in Alderney about two years previously. I have no other record of this bird.

Haliaëtus albicilla. The White-tailed Eagle.

L. has one in his collection, which he shot on the 7th of November, 1887. It is a young bird and said to be a male, though its measurements scarcely bear this out—3 feet 2 inches, across wings 7 feet 6 inches.

On the 2nd of November, 1871, a specimen was shot by a Mr. Edwards and is now set up in Scott's Hotel. This is no doubt the bird spoken of by Mr. Cecil Smith—at all events the dates coincide.

On the 26th of October, 1899, one was shot by Mr. A. C. Tourgis on Burhou, the measurements being the same as the 1887 specimen mentioned above. Mr. Tourgis has it in his collection.

In the autumn of 1908 one was shot by Mr. T. Simon of Alderney:

It is, I think, a not uncommon occasional visitor to the island in autumn and winter, but owing to the fact that it keeps principally to the outlying rocks and Burhou, it is not often seen. During the autumn and winter months, owing to the danger of approach, a bird might remain in

such situations unmolested for comparatively long periods, whilst the rabbits on Burhou would doubtless afford a very succulent dietary.

Accipiter nisus. The Sparrow-Hawk.

An occasional, and not uncommon visitor during both winter and summer, except during the breeding-season, but it is more usually met with in winter. L. has one in his collection, and tells me he has shot six at various times. It is, I think, becoming less common.

Hierofalco islandus candicans. The Greenland Falcon.

Mr. Cecil Smith records that, during his visit to Alderney in 1878 he saw a stuffed specimen of this bird, which had been shot on the island somewhere about the autumn of 1876.

This is the only record I have.

Falco peregrinus. The Peregrine Falcon.

L. has shot two—a female on the 28th of October, 1889, and a male on the 12th of March, 1891.

Mr. Eagle Clarke saw one on the cliffs on the 20th of September, 1898. It is somewhat surprising that it has not been more often recorded, as there are several apparently suitable breeding-places for it at Alderney. I have not myself noticed it.

Falco subbuteo. The Hobby.

I saw one of these birds on the afternoon of the 19th of April, 1920. It stooped to one of the swallow tribe, which it missed, and in doing so came within twenty yards of me, affording an excellent view. I again saw it later on the same afternoon in my garden, but it was doubtless on migration, as it was not about the next day.

Falco æsalon. The Merlin.

L. tells me he has seen two, both during autumn, and that Mr. May of Alderney once shot one.

Mr. Eagle Clarke noticed one at the west end of the island on the 23rd of September, 1898.

Falco tinnunculus. The Kestrel.

A common resident; in fact, more numerous here than I have ever seen it in any part of England, except possibly in one locality in the Isle of Wight last autumn, when it may, perhaps, have been migrating.

Mr. Eagle Clark found it extremely abundant during the last weeks in September 1898, and concluded therefrom that, in the case of Alderney, Mr. Cecil Smith was mistaken in his assumption that its numbers are not increased during the migratory season. My own opinion, however, based on several seasons' observation, is that Mr. Cecil Smith was correct and that this bird does not visit Alderney as a bird of passage, at least to any appreciable extent.

The number actually present on the island is constantly varying throughout the year by interchange of visits to and from the coast of France, and I think that very likely during Mr. Eagle Clarke's visit some of the French birds may have been here, but it may also be that he underestimated the number of residential birds. In walking round the island I should expect to encounter, in normal times, from twelve to twenty birds and very possibly more, whilst the occasions when one or two are not in sight are rare. If this number were collected together on one part of the island for any reason, such as the abundance of coleoptera, it might easily account for the number seen, and if in addition, and probably for the same reason, individuals had arrived from France, the number would be still more easily accounted for.

Phalacrocorax carbo. The Cormorant.

An uncommon winter visitor, and possibly a resident in very small numbers, but I have not myself found it breeding here, nor do I think that I have seen it here in the breeding-season, and I only include it as a resident on the authority of Mr. Cecil Smith, who states that one or two pairs breed at Burhou. Mr. Eagle Clarke found this species very abundant during his visit in September 1898. I have myself only very occasionally noticed it in the winter months, and have only once seen as many as three together. According

to my experience, one would not expect to find the cormorant here except as a casual visitor, as the locality with its strong tides, deep water, and rough rock-bound coast is not suited to it. A cormorant's natural habitats are shallow land-locked bays, and shallow muddy harbours and estuaries.

Phalacrocorax graculus. The Shag.

A common resident breeding here in some numbers, and as in most green water situations, taking the place of the cormorant.

I cannot understand how Mr. Eagle Clarke failed to observe it here in September 1898, as I cannot recall having ever failed to find several when I wished to, either feeding in the tide-way, or, as is often their habit, obtaining their food from the seaweed on the rocks exposed at low water.

Sula bassana. The Gannet.

This bird is not often seen near the shore, although it is a regular visitor outside the breeding-season, and usually in winter.

In December 1912 an immature bird was found on the golf links here with a broken wing and was killed by the man in charge of the links. It had doubtless tried conclusions with a telephone wire.

On the 8th of December, 1918, I was so fortunate as to have under close observation for some time from a point of vantage on shore, an adult male of this species. It was fishing at the entrance to Longy Bay, and I was on the top of an old fort overlooking and within 150 yards of it. The water was extremely clear and the surface smooth, and I could distinctly see the bird's movements under water. In one of its dives it turned through a considerable angle just beneath the surface, apparently by aid of its wings, and in order to follow its prey. On another occasion it entered the water almost horizontally at great speed, and moving rapidly just below the surface, either with its remaining velocity, or perhaps by use of its feet—it did not appear to use its wings—emerged from the water not less than 8 or 10 feet from the point of

entrance. I have not before had the opportunity of studying this bird at close quarters, and cannot say if this is its usual method, but have always thought that it fell vertically on to its prey.

The only time I have seen this bird here in any numbers was on the 19th of May, 1920, when a flock consisting of nine adults and two immature birds were observed fishing close to the shore. At this time, it was reported by the fishermen that large quantities of small pollack were off the coast, and a herd of at least fifty porpoises (*Delphinus phocaena*) of all ages was constantly patrolling round the island, so there were certain abnormal conditions to account for this, and the same conditions obtained still a week later, when large numbers of gannets were reported between Alderney and Guernsey.

Anser anser. The Grey-lag Goose.

L. tells me that this bird is an occasional winter visitor, coming to the island during hard weather, and usually in small trips of six or seven individuals. A number have been shot at various times. I have not myself observed it, but the winters I have passed on the island have been comparatively mild.

Anser brachyrhynchus. The Pink-footed Goose.

I killed one of these birds during a strong north-east gale on the 19th of December, 1913. It was by itself and rose from the rough grass bordering Longy Bay.

Branta bernicla. The Brent Goose.

Small trips of these birds are often seen off the rocks during the winter months. A winter visitor, but varying much in numbers according to the severity of the weather.

Anas boschas. The Wild Duck.

A winter visitor in small numbers and during severe weather only. They do not remain long, as they are almost immediately shot at. I have observed it occasionally in the autumn as a bird of passage.

Querquedula crecca. The Teal.

A winter visitor in small numbers during hard weather and never remaining long. L. tells me he usually sees a few in August and September, so it is also a bird of passage.

Mareca penelope. The Wigeon.

As in the case of the last two, this bird is a winter visitor in hard weather only, and in quite small numbers. It departs as soon as the weather modifies, if not in the meantime accounted for by the local sportsman. I cannot find that it ever occurs as a bird of passage.

Dafila acuta. The Pintail.

Mr. Cecil Smith says of this bird :—" Captain Hubbach writes me word that he shot one in Alderney in January 1863."

Edemia nigra. The Common Scoter.

Mr. Cecil Smith says :—"The Scoter is a common autumn and winter visitant to all the islands, generally making its appearance in considerable flocks." I am afraid its numbers must have sadly diminished since Mr. Smith's day, as I do not remember seeing it when stationed in Guernsey, nor on my fairly frequent winter passages between Alderney and Guernsey. I shot an immature female of this species in Longy Bay on the 9th of August, 1919. It was by itself and doubtless a straggler from some flock. I have no other record of it for the island, though it no doubt visits Burhou and some of the outlying rocks during winter.

Mergus merganser. The Goosander.

Mr. Cecil Smith says :—"The Goosander is a regular and tolerably numerous visitant to all the islands, arriving in the autumn and remaining throughout the winter." I have no other record of it, but birds which keep the sea, such as the divers and diving-ducks, are difficult to observe from land. Had I the facilities for going afloat during winter, I have little doubt but that this list could have been added to, in one or two particulars.

Mergus serrator. The Red-breasted Merganser.

This bird is occasionally seen in the autumn as a bird of passage, and a few visit the island in winter, usually during hard weather, or strong winds.

Mergellus albellus. The Smew.

I saw one of these birds, either a female or immature male, in Longy Bay in December 1918. It had been blowing hard from the north-east for some days.

Ardea cinerea. The Heron.

This bird pays the island an occasional visit both in the late summer and in winter. They presumably come from the French shore, and, so far as my observations go, usually make their appearance during spring-tides, when, doubtless, the fishing amongst the rocks at low water is better and more secure. I have never seen more than one at a time and they do not stay long.

L. says they are occasionally seen in winter, and on one occasion a pair remained throughout the summer. In 1917 he, on one occasion, saw three together on the rocks in Longy Bay.

Ardea purpurea. The Purple Heron.

Mr. Cecil Smith records one as being shot in Alderney about the middle of May, 1878, and quotes Mr. MacCulloch as the authority for another one shot here on the 8th of May, 1867.

Botaurus stellaris. The Bittern.

Mr. Cecil Smith says of this bird:—"The birdstuffer in Alderney (Mr. Grieve) and his friend told me they had shot Bitterns in that island, but did not remember the date."

Mr. Tourgis informs me that he once shot a Bittern here. It was during the winter of either 1892 or 1893. L. tells me that his father, Mr. J. A. Langlois, and a Mr. Sandford each shot a Bittern here sometime between 1880 and 1882.

Platalea leucorodia. The Spoonbill.

Mr. Godfrey, of Mannez Farm, Alderney, informs me

that he shot a Spoonbill on the rocks near Longy Bay, about fifteen years ago, and that he kept the beak for some time. Neither this nor the preceding bird can easily be mistaken for others, and I have little doubt that they were correctly identified.

Ædicnemus œdicnemus. The Stone-Curlew.

L. tells me that he shot one out of a little lot of four in December 1887. Mr. Tourgis also once shot one.

Phalaropus fulicarius. The Grey Phalarope.

Mr. Cecil Smith says:—"The Grey Phalarope is a tolerably regular and occasionally numerous autumnal visitant to all the islands." This does not apply now, and if it occurs at all it does so very seldom, although there seems to be no reason why it should not, as it is still, at times, fairly numerous on the opposite coast of Dorset.

Scolopax rusticola. The Woodcock.

It is to these birds that the islanders owe the greater part of their sport. They come over from the French coast in some numbers during the winter months, when the wind is in the east, or, better still, the south-east. They also come in calm weather and especially when there is a fog, and would doubtless remain were it not for the sporting proclivities of the inhabitants. They are met with principally on the cliffs, and a good spaniel is necessary to insure sport.

The Woodcock may often be seen coming over from the opposite coast at dusk, more especially if there is a moon, and I think that, in favourable weather, these birds, as well as the Snipe, make a regular flight across the Race, arriving here soon after dark, and the majority leaving for the French coast just before daylight. The following table giving the date of the first Cock of the season shot in Alderney since 1889, has been very kindly given to me by L., and since it possesses a certain human, as well as a scientific, interest, I give it here in its entirety and as received from him.

*Record of the date the first Woodcock has been shot in Alderney
since 1889.*

Year.	Month.	Shot by.	Locality.	Wind.	Remarks.
1889.	Oct. 18.	Mr. L. J. A. Langlois.	Martin's Bridge.	W.	
1890.	Oct. 19.	Mr. J. Herivel.	La Quoire.	S.E.	
1891.	Oct. 24.	Mr. A. C. Tourgis.	Bon Terre.	N.W.	
1892.	Oct. 14.	Sergt.-Maj. R. McLernon.	Clonque.	W.	
1893.	Oct. 20.	Mr. J. Brooks.	Telegraph.	S.W.	
1894.	Oct. 16.	Mr. N. Gandion.	Bégignes.	W.	
1895.	Oct. 17.	Mr. H. Oliver.	Giffoine.	N.W.	
1896.	Oct. 17.	Mr. R. G. May.	Vallongy.	N.E.	
1897.	Oct. 19.	Mr. T. Brooks.	Val du Sud.	S.	
1898.	Oct. 21.	Mr. A. C. Tourgis.	Bon Terre.	N.W.	Missed by V. Petite on the 15th.
1899.	Oct. 23.	Capt. L. J. A. Langlois.	Vallongy.	N.E.	
1900.	Oct. 12.	Mr. R. G. May.	Essex.	S.E.	
1901.	Oct. 29.	Mr. A. C. Tourgis.	Bégignes.	W.	
1902.	Oct. 17.	Mr. N. Gandion.	Trois Vaux.	W.S.W.	Flushed on the 11th by R. Herivel. Seen flying over Braye on the 19th.
1903.	Oct. 23.	Mr. Jas. M. Gantier.	Longy drain.	S.E.	
1904.	Oct. 3.	Mr. J. Brooks.	Bon Terre.	N.W.	
1905.	Oct. 11.	Capt. Theobald.	Essex.	E.S.E.	
1906.	Oct. 12.	Mr. J. Brooks.	W.	
1907.	Oct. 21.	Mr. R. G. May.	Essex.	E.S.E.	
1908.	Oct. 20.	Major L. J. A. Langlois.	Mouriaux.	N.N.W.	Mrs. L. Langlois flushed it on the 18th.
1909.	Oct. 26.	Mr. W. LeCoeq.	Trois Vaux.	W.S.W.	
1910.	Oct. 17.	Mr. Jas. M. Gantier.	Longy drain.	S.E.	
1911.	Oct. 2.	Mr. A. C. Tourgis.	Trois Vaux.	W.S.W.	
1912.	Oct. 23.	Mr. J. P. Simon.	Essex.	E.S.E.	
1913.	Oct. 16.	Mr. E. Gantier.	Manez.	N.E.	V. Petite missed one on the 11th.
1914.	Oct. 15.	Major L. J. A. Langlois.	Essex.	E.S.E.	Mrs. L. Langlois flushed one in Pré gardens on 5th, and Major H. de L. Walters missed one in Essex on the 8th.
1915.	Oct. 20.	Mr. C. Cooley.	N.E.	
1916.	Oct. 20.	Mr. W. LeCoeq.	S.W.	
1917.	Nov. 5.	Major L. J. A. Langlois.	Val du Sud.	S.	
1918.	Oct. 19.	Mr. V. Petite.	W.	
1919.	Oct. 9.	Mr. N. W. Gandion.	Essex.	N.E.	

Gallinago gallinago. The Common Snipe.

A few are nearly always to be met with during the winter months, but it becomes more numerous during spells of hard weather. L. tells me that in 1899 Mr. W. LeCoeq shot one of the dark variety of this bird formerly known as Sabine's Snipe, but it was unfortunately not preserved. I am of the opinion that, in favourable weather, this bird, as well as the Woodcock, pays regular visits to the island, crossing the Race at dusk and returning to the Cotentin at dawn. I have on several occasions seen it arriving in the evening from the direction of France.

Gallinago media. The Great Snipe.

L. tells me that he once saw one of these birds, and that Mr. R. G. May has, at various times, shot three. None of them seem to have been preserved, and this is the only record I can find of it.

Limnocyptes gallinula. The Jack Snipe.

A few usually to be met with during the winter months, becoming more numerous in severe weather.

Tringa maritima. The Purple Sandpiper.

I had one of these birds under close observation for over half an hour on the 13th of December, 1913. It was feeding among the seaweed on the rocks at the base of the breakwater. I have no other record of this bird, which is not uncommon, in suitable localities, on the opposite coast of Dorset.

Tringa alpina. The Dunlin.

The Dunlin occurs most numerous as a bird of passage, although a few invariably winter here, and in hard weather it even becomes plentiful. A flock of six of these birds in summer plumage frequented Longy Bay during the first week of May, 1919.

Calidris arenaria. The Sanderling.

Mr. Cecil Smith says:—"The Sanderling is a regular and rather early visitant to all the islands." I have not

noticed it myself, and it has undoubtedly become more scarce since Mr. Smith's time.

Langlois has one of these birds in his collection, shot by himself in Alderney some years ago. I had previously overlooked it, mistaking it for a Dunlin.

Totanus totanus. The Redshank.

This bird is fairly common in the late summer and autumn as a bird of passage, but is less frequent in the spring. The first birds usually make their appearance towards the end of July and depart again early in September, although one or two generally winter here.

Totanus nebularius. The Greenshank.

I saw a single individual of this species feeding in Longy Bay on the 22nd of July, 1919. This is the only record I have for Alderney.

Totanus hypoleucus. The Common Sandpiper.

This Sandpiper is not uncommon during the spring and autumn migrations, and some few, doubtless non-breeding birds, usually pass the summer here; but the majority arrive about the middle of July, and remain until September. These birds have been particularly numerous this year (1920), and a large number have remained throughout the summer.

Limosa lapponica. The Bar-tailed Godwit.

These birds are occasionally met with as birds of passage in spring and autumn. Two were obtained at the Casquets Light in the spring of 1918, and I saw one feeding in Longy Bay on the 21st of August, 1919.

Numenius arquata. The Curlew.

Common during the winter months, a flock of some thirty birds or so being usually seen in the vicinity of Longy Bay. They usually make their first appearance in July. Mr. Cecil Smith says that they remain throughout the summer, but I do not think this is the case nowadays, except in isolated

cases. A pair have, however, remained here throughout this present summer (1920).

Numenius phaeopus. The Whimbrel.

Common as a bird of passage in the spring, and usually remaining throughout the greater part of May. It is far less common in the autumn. I saw one in Longy Bay on the 21st of August, 1919.

Charadrius apricarius. The Golden Plover.

Occurs as a bird of passage in both spring and autumn, and often appears in large flocks during hard weather in winter, but in mild winters few or none are seen. Last year, however, was an exception, and a flock of fifteen or sixteen birds arrived about the middle of October (1919) and remained for about a fortnight, although the weather was quite mild.

Squatarola squatarola. The Grey Plover.

An occasional winter visitor in small numbers, but never numerous nor seen in large flocks. I shot one in Longy Bay on the 10th of December, 1919, and another in summer plumage on the 19th of April, 1920.

Ægialitis hiaticula. The Ringed Plover.

Common in late summer and winter. I have not noticed it here in the breeding-season and do not think it nests here, certainly not in any numbers.

Ægialitis alexandrina. The Kentish Plover.

A fairly common summer visitor. I shot one out of three in Longy Bay on the 27th of March, 1919—a very early date. A few pairs breed in the neighbourhood, but their numbers are decreasing. Three eggs appear to be the maximum number they lay, and they often do not lay more than two. The eggs of this bird are not easy to find, as before incubation takes place there is usually no sign of a nest, and the eggs are, in most cases, more than three-fourths covered with sand, whilst after the bird has commenced to sit, the eggs will generally be found fully exposed and

resting in a neatly rounded hollow. I was at first much puzzled over this circumstance and imagined it was a method adopted by the bird to conceal its eggs; but latterly, and with more experience of other small objects resting on this sand—some of which are still beneath it,—I have inclined to the opinion that it was due to the wind blowing the sand over the nest and thus filling up the hollow and almost covering the eggs. This would naturally not take place when the bird was sitting.

Eudromias morinellus. The Dotterel.

L. has shot three — one in 1898, one in 1900, and one in 1902—all in the early spring. He has one in his collection. I saw two of these birds in the flesh, which had been shot by a man in Longy Bay on the 1st of September, 1919.

Vanellus vanellus. The Lapwing.

There are usually a few about during the autumn and winter months, but these are often augmented by the arrival of large flocks during hard weather. I saw a flock of ten as late as the 1st of April, 1914. I have no evidence that they breed here, and have not seen them here in the summer.

Hæmatopus ostralegus. The Oystercatcher.

The Oystercatcher is a very common resident, breeding numerous in the vicinity. I do not think its numbers are appreciably, if at all, affected by migration. During the years 1913 and 1914, I had frequently noticed a white variety of this bird. It was usually to be seen feeding among the others in the neighbourhood of Longy Bay. It appeared to be almost pure white, and, at a distance, had much the appearance of a Kittiwake, showing up plainly against the dark background of seaweed and rock. On my return to Alderney in the autumn of 1918, I again saw a white Oystercatcher in the same neighbourhood. Was it, I wonder, the same bird?

The Oystercatcher usually lays three eggs, but I have on

two occasions found nests containing four. The nests of this bird are very varied in construction, and well worth studying. Perhaps more often than not, no nest is constructed at all, but the eggs deposited amongst the stones of the beach. Again, the eggs are often laid in a hollow formed against the seaweed thrown up at high spring-tides. I once found two eggs jambed in a crevice between two large stones, their small ends vertically downwards—an extraordinary and one would imagine uncomfortable position, especially for the young birds, if they ever hatched out. Nests are often carefully lined with small limpet shells, some half an inch in diameter, with their small ends uppermost, and as these have usually been washed smooth and white by the action of the waves, the nests thus formed are very conspicuous. I once found one in an old fort. It was placed in a hollow against the racer of an old gun emplacement, and lined with granite-gravel taken from the old pathway in the fort. This gravel, which normally is rough and angular, was most carefully laid and fitted together, a flat surface of each pebble upwards, giving the appearance of an old Roman mosaic work.

Arenaria interpres. The Turnstone.

A common winter visitor, arriving in late August or September. A few remain throughout the year, but, I think, only non-breeding birds. Mr. Cecil Smith considered that they bred on the islands, but the evidence of this seemed to be uncertain even in his time, and I do not know that the nest and eggs have actually been found.

Larus canus. The Common Gull.

Mr. Cecil Smith says:—"The Common Gull, though by no means uncommon in the Channel Islands during the winter, never remains to breed."

Larus argentatus. The Herring-Gull.

A common resident, but more plentiful during the breeding-season than at other times of the year.

Larus marinus. The Greater Black-backed Gull.

A resident, breeding here.

Larus fuscus affinis. The British Lesser Black-backed Gull.

A common resident, breeding here, though less numerous than the Herring-Gull. The Herring-Gull and the Lesser Black-backed Gull breed here in the same localities and in some cases in the same colony, but if one carefully observes these birds whilst on their nests, it will be noticed that in most cases the Herring-Gull chooses the bare rock or face of a cliff, whilst the Black-backed Gull, although nesting close at hand, seems to prefer to place its nest amongst grass and undergrowth, or on the soil. The Greater Black-backed Gull is a solitary individual; it does not nest in colonies, and when possible seems to prefer a small isolated rock to itself.

Larus ridibundus. The Black-headed Gull.

A few may generally be met with in winter.

Larus minutus. The Little Gull.

This Gull is not uncommon during the winter months, but it prefers to keep some distance from shore and so is not often seen. It appears to be more numerous during heavy gales.

Rissa tridactyla. The Kittiwake.

Some usually to be seen during winter, and I have noticed one or two throughout the summer, but these are probably non-breeding birds.

Sterna hirundo. The Common Tern.

Before the war this bird occurred as a bird of passage in small numbers, but I did not see it either last year (1919) or this spring, which is curious, seeing that a colony breed near Guernsey.

Sterna paradisea. The Arctic Tern.

These birds were common in Longy Bay and off the coast during the first week in September 1920.

Sterna minuta. The Little Tern.

On the 5th of September, 1919, I saw a few of these birds fishing in Longy Bay. This is the only record I have for it.

Sterna sandvicensis. The Sandwich Tern.

Some hundreds, quite possibly over a thousand, of these birds appeared off the coast on the 12th of September, 1920, after all the Arctic Terns, mentioned above, had left. It was difficult to estimate the number, as Alderney Race, as far as the eye could see, appeared to be full of them. They were fishing busily, some quite close to the shore. On the 13th, however, they had evidently passed on, and there were none to be seen. I had previously seen two of these birds in Longy Bay on the 9th inst., one of which I obtained.

Alca torda. The Razorbill.

A resident, but more numerous in the breeding-season than at other times.

Uria troille. The Common Guillemot.

A resident, less common than the last species, but, as in the case of that bird, more numerous during the nesting-season than at other times.

Fratercula arctica. The Puffin.

A very common summer visitor, breeding here in large numbers. In August 1913 a disease seems to have attacked the colony of Puffins breeding on Burhou, and the whole island was thickly covered with the dead bodies of these birds.

Thalassidroma pelagica. The Stormy Petrel.

Whether the Stormy Petrel should be considered a resident or a summer visitor I am not certain. It still breeds in the neighbourhood in some numbers, but I have not noticed it at other times of the year. This is however, perhaps, not unnatural, considering its habits.

Puffinus puffinus. The Manx Shearwater.

I have only come across this bird on one occasion. During the last week in May and the first day or two in June of this year (1920) it was comparatively plentiful off the shore. I do not know that it breeds here, but if not, its appearance at this time of year is certainly curious. I may add, however, as a possible explanation of the circumstance, that the period referred to was noticeable for the large shoals of young pollack, the herds of porpoises, and the flocks of gannets in the vicinity.

Mr. Eagle Clarke found it very numerous off the Casquets on the 30th of September, 1898, and Mr. Cecil Smith considers it an occasional wanderer to the Channel Islands.

Puffinus gravis. The Great Shearwater.

Mr. Eagle Clarke saw a single example of this bird, among the Manx Shearwaters, off the Casquets on the 30th of September, 1898, and Mr. Cecil Smith includes it as an occasional wanderer to the Islands, on the strength of having seen a small flock of four or five of them in the Channel in July 1866, whilst still within sight of the Casquets. I have myself occasionally noticed this bird whilst crossing between Guernsey and Weymouth.

Colymbus arcticus. The Black-throated Diver.

I saw one of these birds in the Roads on the 15th of April, 1914. It was fishing close under the breakwater.

Colymbus immer. The Great Northern Diver.

Mr. Cecil Smith says:—"The Great Northern Diver is a common autumn and winter visitant to all the Islands." I have not myself seen it, and think that they have become less numerous since Mr. Smith's time—at any rate in this locality.

Colymbus stellatus. The Red-throated Diver.

Occasionally visits the Roads and Longy Bay in winter, usually during rough weather or after a storm.

Podiceps auritus. The Slavonian Grebe.

A regular winter visitor in small numbers. This, as well as the next species, is usually met with either off the Platte Saline beach or in Longy Bay.

Podiceps cristatus. The Great Crested Grebe.

A regular winter visitor in small numbers, but perhaps slightly less numerous than the last species.

Rallus aquaticus. The Water-Rail.

A by no means uncommon winter visitor. I cannot find that it breeds here, nor have I met with it during the breeding-season. L. tells me that, when out shooting, he has frequently seen this bird sitting on a fence, or the branch of a tree, watching the dog working in the ditch below. This is, of course, a rather usual habit of the Moorhen, but I have not before heard of the Water-Rail behaving thus.

Porzana porzana. The Spotted Crake.

L. shot one here on the 10th of November, 1891, and has it in his collection.

Porzana pusilla intermedia. Baillon's Crake.

L. shot one in the autumn of 1891, the same year in which he shot the Spotted Crake, but he has not the exact date. The bird is in his collection.

Crex crex. The Land-Rail.

A common summer visitor and also a bird of passage, but as such is more frequently met with in autumn than in spring. L. says of this bird:—"From the end of August to October large flights arrive with north-west and north-east winds. Mr. R. G. May shot fifty on one day in September 1886. My largest bag in one day was twenty-seven, but of late years they do not come in such large numbers. When a flight arrives it never remains over the second night." The record of these large flights in September is very interesting. Mr. Cecil Smith makes no mention of these

flights in his book ; so it would seem as if Guernsey were rather out of their line of migration.

There would seem to be reasons, indicated above, which might account for these birds not remaining over the second night.

Gallinula chloropus. The Moorhen.

Occasionally met with in winter, and it would appear from the following account that it probably sometimes breeds here, which I should not think unlikely. I saw one shot at the bottom of my garden in the autumn of 1919. L. says :—" I have shot seven at various times and killed the eighth on the 21st of January, 1914. During the summer of 1916 there were eight in the Longy pond—cocks and hens. I watched them daily for hours playing about on the edge of the pond, and think they must have bred there."

Fulica atra. The Coot.

L. tells me that he has seen at least two, which were shot here at different times many years ago. This is the only record I have for it.

Columba palumbus. The Wood-Pigeon.

The Wood-Pigeon is common as a bird of passage, especially during spring, when it often arrives in large flocks towards the latter end of April or beginning of May, and only remains a short time. Its late arrival is somewhat curious, as in England it is an early breeder. It is also met with in small numbers in the late summer, when the harvest is being gathered and at odd times during the winter months. I have not found it breeding here.

Columba livia. The Rock-Dove.

One or two of these birds frequent the island throughout the year, and despite its small numbers it can, I think, be looked upon as a resident. I found a pair nesting here during the last season (1920), and expect that a pair or two do so regularly.

Coturnix coturnix. The Quail.

From the fact that these birds occasionally winter in the south of England, it might be thought that some would pass the winter in Alderney; but this does not appear to be the case, and Langlois can only recall one instance of the Quail being seen there during the winter months, and this was one he shot in November many years ago. All the breeding-birds leave the island early, and mostly before the opening of the shooting-season.

XXIV.—*Notes on Birds in South Russia.*

By Lieut. J. N. KENNEDY, M.C., R.A., F.R.G.S., M.B.O.U.

DURING my recent service with the British Military Mission in southern Russia, I made occasional notes on birds, and I have now put them together in this paper, more in the hope that they may prove of use to future observers in these regions, than in the belief that they contain any original observations of value.

After an extended tour through central and south Russia during the autumn and early winter of 1919, I found myself at Novorossisk, a little seaport near the northern extremity of the Caucasus range. Our activities had been much limited by the retreat and disorganisation of Denikin's Army, and at Novorossisk we were awaiting for some two months the inevitable order to embark with the remains of the forces. It was during this period that I found leisure to make a small collection of bird-skins, and to compile the notes which form the first section of this article.

In the Crimea, after a short period of re-organisation of the White Army, now commanded by General Wrangel, we were involved once more, during the spring and summer of 1920, in active operations, and I was unable to make any systematic ornithological observations. I have therefore contented myself, in the second section, with a few general remarks on the Crimea, in which I include some suggestions given to me by Lieutenant V. Martino, of the Russian Army,